

Tornadoes, 30 May 2004

Hopkins and Webster County

For those that don't already know, we live in the western section of Hopkins Co between Beulah and Charleston in the Lick Creek area on Hwy 109. We watched Channel 25 in Evansville, Ind all afternoon and evening [closest thing we have to a "local" channel in the county... they send news crews to the county when news breaks], at least during the time that our satellite was up, which was sporadic at best. The sky was dark and wind blowing. At one point we had hail but it didn't last long. Rain is another matter... I thought it would never stop raining. And the lightning was horrific at times.

There were several different storms. The first one was mid-afternoon. It tracked just north of Dawson Springs area. I haven't heard of any damage in Dawson. There was 4 or 5 rotations in this storm being tracked by radar at one point as it headed east across the county. This is the storm that did the most damage in Hopkins Co. At least one

tornado was on the ground. I haven't gone down thru Ilesley which is on Hwy 112 just north of Hwy 62 about 5 miles or so northeast of Dawson. If there is any damage there it would be minor I think. The tornado came down to ground level somewhere between Ilesley and Mortons Gap area and we heard it hit Central High School which is on Hwy 41A between Earlington and Mortons Gap. It then crossed Pennyrile Parkway just north of exit 37 [Petro Truck Stop] and tracked across rural Hopkins Co toward Ohio, Muhlenberg and McLean counties.

The storm later in the evening crossed Providence in Webster Co and went thru Nebo, Manitou and the northern section of Hopkins Co.

My friend Carole Palmer [Webster Co CC] in Lexington said the newspaper there this morning said that the hardest hit Kentucky areas in the storm was Hopkins and Powell counties.

OK, now for damage report. My grandson and I took a tour of Providence, east on 41A to Madisonville, down Pennyrile Parkway to Exit 37, to Mortons Gap, north on 41A to Earlington and then back home thru the Richland community and Beulah. I should have taken 112 to Ilesley but frankly didn't think of it since the tornado didn't come down until after it went thru Ilesley.

Anyway, most of the damage we saw was in Providence. We had heard a mobile home park there was wiped out but we found the park and while there was some damage it wasn't near as bad as we had heard and it definately wasn't wiped out... lots of tree damage and we saw 1 mobile home that had no underpinning and power lines to it down [2nd photo]. I stopped and spoke to a young woman who said her mother ran the place. She said there was no fatalities in town that she had heard of, and as far as she knew that mobile home park was the hardest hit in the area.

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We drove all over Providence and saw lots of trees uprooted,



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broken tree limbs, lots of small branches etc,



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and downed power lines.



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I saw only 1 house with any major damage and it wasn't really major... a tree in the yard was uprooted and fell, apparently catching a corner of the porch.



Hopkins county had some wind damage. . . some trees uprooted, branches down etc. I saw nothing of consequence anywhere in Hopkins County except at Central High School. I wasn't able to get photos . . . the driveway into the school property was blocked by security people. We could see that the softball fence [chainlink] was pushed over. We saw nothing else in the Mortons Gap area beyond a few tree limbs. I'm not saying there isn't more extensive damage but if there is it wasn't seen by us.

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Finally, there is flooding in some parts of the county, particularly in our pasture. I don't know how much rain we got but it was lots for sure.

The trees in the distance are west side of Hwy 109. This is the front pasture as seen from our drive. On the far end of the pasture is a fence line on both sides of our daughter and son-in-laws driveway. I think it was flooded last night / this morning. Lick Creek just can't stay in it's banks.



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As we watched the radar tracking during the storms we commented on the fact that most of the area involved was rural Hopkins County and how fortunate it was. God was certainly looking after us all yesterday.